

Judge Otto Kerner

United States Court of Appeals  
for the Seventh Circuit

Otto Kerner was born in Chicago, Illinois, August 15, 1908, and attended public school in Chicago and Oak Park High School. He was graduated from Brown University in 1930, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1930 and 1931 he studied at Trinity College, Cambridge University, England. Subsequently, he attended Northwestern University Law School and was graduated Juris Doctor in 1934. He was admitted to the bar in 1934 and entered the private practice of law.

In 1947, he was appointed United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. He served in that office until nominated in 1954 as candidate for County Judge of Cook County. He was elected and re-elected in 1958.

Nominated for Governor in 1960, he was elected to a four-year term on November 8, and subsequently re-elected in 1964, the second Democratic governor in the last 100 years to receive this honor from the citizens of Illinois.

During his administration Illinois developed a mental health program considered the best in the nation; secured a new criminal code and reorganized the state court system; enacted the first fair employment legislation in the state's

history; instituted much heralded revenue reforms; sponsored the first overseas trade mission on the part of state government to Europe and the Far East; reduced public aid rolls and saw more citizens go to work at higher wages than ever before.

In the vital field of education, the creation of the Board of Higher Education led to the Master Plan for Higher Education in Illinois with a junior college system as a key feature. In addition, for the first time in the history of Illinois, expenditures for education not only were at the highest level of any time, but constituted the single greatest item in the total budget. Increased scholarship grants from 5 to 30 million dollars for use at public and private colleges in Illinois.

JULY

In 1967, as Governor, Judge Kerner was named chairman of the National Commission on Civil Disorders by President Johnson, with the task of investigating one of the most troubling problems of our times. He was formerly chairman of the Midwestern Governors Conference and served on the executive committee of the National Governors Conference.

(Commission concluded MARCH 1, 1968 With issuance of the Report.)

On May 20, 1968, he took the oath of office of Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Federal Circuit (which includes Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin), having received his commission from President Lyndon B. Johnson in April.

He holds honorary degrees from <sup>e/eren</sup> ~~nine~~ colleges and universities.

Together with his professional career went a career in the military. Otto Kerner, who had been a member of the Illinois National Guard since enlisting as a Private in 1934, advancing through the ranks, went on active duty with the 33rd Infantry Division in March, 1941, and was promoted to Major, Field Artillery, in 1942.

He served with the 34th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division, in the Mediterranean Theatre, was later assigned to the Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and re-assigned to the Pacific Theatre, serving with the 32nd Infantry Division. He was mustered out of active service with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Upon his return to the United States, Judge Kerner re-entered the Illinois National Guard and retired in 1954 as Major General.

Otto Kerner is a vice president of the Boy Scouts of America (Chicago Council), vice president of the John Howard Association, and is an advisor to the Adult Education Council of Greater Chicago. He is also a member of various other

organizations, fraternal, civic and professional. He is a Trustee ~~Executive~~ of Brown University.

He is married to the former Helena Cermak and they have two children.